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UNH-Led Collaborative Identifies Need for System That Integrates Behavioral Health with Primary Care

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UNH-Led Collaborative Identifies Need for System That Integrates Behavioral Health with Primary Care

Tuesday, January 31, 2017

(HTTPS://WWW.UNH.EDU/UNHTODAY/NEWS/2017/01/31/UNH-LED-COLLABORATIVE-IDENTIFIES-NEED-SYSTEM-INTEGRATES-BEHAVIORAL-HEALTH)

DURHAM, N.H. – New Hampshire residents will benefit from a health care system that integrates behavioral health into primary care, according to a report released by the University of New Hampshire's Institute for Health Policy and Practice (IHPP) and the New Hampshire Citizens Health Initiative (NHCHI).

The learning collaborative also included the identification and exploration of challenges in payment for substance use disorder screening and treatment. According to the report, the state's current opiate epidemic highlights the need for better screening for behavioral health issues, prevention and treatment referral in primary care.

The research^[1], conducted in partnership with 60 organizations, is based on a philosophy of shared data and shared learning that emphasizes the importance of transparency across all stakeholder groups.

Twenty-five to 30 percent of visits for primary medical care either originate from or have a significant related behavioral health component. Research also found that depression and anxiety with a co-occurring chronic medical condition increase costs dramatically.

"The evidence is clear that addressing behavioral health concerns like depression, anxiety, and substance abuse disorders in primary care would improve outcomes," said Jeanne Ryer, director of the New Hampshire Citizens Health Initiative. "We're pleased to see New Hampshire medical and behavioral health providers and insurers working together to put this evidence-based practice to work for our residents."

The Institute for Health Policy and Practice is an applied research institute located within UNH's College of Health and Human Services. IHPP conducts and disseminates high-quality, cutting-edge applied research and policy work that enables health system partners to implement evidence-based strategies to improve population health.

The NH Citizens Health Initiative is a multi-stakeholder collaborative effort that promotes health systems transformation in New Hampshire to improve the health of NH's population, in line with the Triple Aim of better health, better care, and lower costs. The initiative, a program of the Institute for Health Policy and Practice at UNH, has a 10-year history of leading, incubating, and testing innovative health care transformation efforts.

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